

## \$500,000 DEMANDED FOR DUVEEN OPINION

His Criticism of Reputed Da Vinci Painting Subject of Suit.

PLAINTIFF IN FRANCE

'La Belle Ferroniere' Once More Figures in Notable Adventure.

FINGER PRINTS RELIED ON

Old Master's Practice Cited by Counsel to Establish Its Authenticity.

Half a million dollars as redress for an opinion that Sir Joseph Duveen of the art firm of Duveen Brothers, 720 Fifth avenue, is purported to have expressed concerning the origin of a painting is demanded in papers served upon the noted art dealer yesterday afternoon in his private office.

Finger prints imprinted upon the surface of the work by the master, who, it is claimed, was Leonardo da Vinci, will be relied upon to prove the authenticity of the picture although the hands that made these marks have been still 402 years. The picture is "La Belle Ferroniere," and the owner is Mrs. Andree Hahn, niece of the Marquis de Chambure of Brittany and wife of Capt. Harry J. Hahn, a young American aviator who was on Gen. Pershing's staff in France and who won the Legion of Honor and War Cross.

Stormy Petrel of Art World.

If the picture is genuine, and there are alleged to be documents as well as finger prints to establish that fact, another adventure of a painting which has been a stormy petrel of the art world for centuries has begun.

The papers were served upon Sir Joseph, who returned Tuesday on the Olympic from London, by Mrs. Helen Rice, a pretty and fashionably gowned young woman who played the role of process server. Although Mrs. Rice called four times at the offices in Fifth avenue it was not until she had revealed that she had papers for Sir Joseph that she succeeded in seeing him. No attempt was made by the art dealer to avoid service, and he thanked her most cordially when she thrust the documents into his hands.

Mrs. Hahn and her husband live

## Painting in \$500,000 Dispute



La Belle Ferroniere, said to have been executed by Leonardo Da Vinci. Because he expressed an opinion that the painting was not a genuine Da Vinci, Sir Joseph Duveen is being sued for damages.

abroad, and are now in Dinard, France. They are represented here by Hyacinthe Ringrose, an attorney who once practised in New York but is now of Paris. Mr. Ringrose came here specially to start the suit.

"La Belle Ferroniere," which is a portrait of Lucrezia Crivelli, mistress of Francis I, in which the eyes have much the same haunting, unfathomable expression of Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," at one time hung in the Louvre. From there, so old reports have it, the painting was stolen and for a century or more passed through many hands and more adventure.

It came to America last year as the result of the municipal patriotism of wealthy men of Kansas City, who bought the Kansas City Art Institute and offered to pay \$500,000 for it.

The sale was about to be consummated when Sir Joseph Duveen, it is alleged, gave an interview to an art reporter of *The World*, published June 17, 1920, in which he is quoted as saying:

"The picture sent to Kansas City is

George Soria's certificate is worthless if it really relates to the Kansas City picture. He is not an expert in the works of Leonardo."

Mr. Ringrose contends that Soria, the official expert of the French Government, connected with the Tribunal of the Seine, "expertised" the painting, saying that it was a genuine Leonardo, and that Soria is an expert on Leonardo, who is of the school of Italian primitives. He says that Da Vinci painted replicas of his distinguished works, Mona Lisa, one in the Louvre, and the other in the Prado Gallery, Madrid, and of the "Virgin of the Rocks," as well as of "La Belle Ferroniere."

"I wonder if Sir Joseph knows that it was the practice of Leonardo and all the other Italian painters of his period to soften their paints when wet with the finger tips," Mr. Ringrose said. "We can prove, even by finger-print proof, that our 'La Belle Ferroniere' is undoubtedly a Da Vinci. Every picture painted by this great master shows his finger prints in a manner impossible to duplicate."

"Again, Sir Joseph said that Mme. Hahn's picture could not be genuine because the only genuine 'La Belle Ferroniere' hangs in the Louvre. If the gentleman will examine the official catalogue offered for sale in the Louvre he will learn that the officials of the Louvre do not feel quite so sure on that subject. The expert De Ricci, who compiled that catalogue, says that the picture is not by Da Vinci, but by one of his pupils, Boltraffio."

Mr. Ringrose has in his possession a letter signed "Duveen Brothers" addressed to John T. Harding, attorney for the Kansas City Art Institute, in which it is stated that the firm has been in communication with Sir Joseph and that his reply "indicates that he has in no way changed his opinion in regard to the picture, believing it to be an old copy of a Leonardo example not contemporary, probably somewhat later." This letter adds that most experts are in doubt also as to whether the "La Belle Ferroniere" now in the Louvre is a Leonardo, "an opinion shared by Sir Joseph." This letter was written six weeks after the *World* story.

Sir Joseph declined to comment on the suit last night.

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## FILM STOCK FRAUDS TARGET OF BANKERS

American Association Joins Motion Picture Vigilantes to Help Investors.

The American Bankers Association and the vigilance committee of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry will join to protect investors against fraudulent stock schemes of wildcat film companies, it was agreed yesterday at a luncheon at the Uptown Club.

Martin J. Quigley, chairman, said the vigilance committee will have representatives in twenty-five of the largest cities of the country to furnish prompt information regarding any motion picture enterprises launched in their respective territory.

He said that more than \$50,000,000 was invested in fake film promotions last year.

John Young of the National City Company pledged the assistance of banking interests, saying application would be made to the committee for details regarding new film concerns for the protection of investors. G. B. Walker of the public relations committee of the bankers' association said that the report of the vigilance committee would be put through the association's regular channels. Bankers fully appreciate the importance of the committee's work, asserted Thomas J. Reynolds, vice-president of the National City Bank, and the Investment Bankers' association will work in harmony with it.

Most of the worthless stock offered to credulous investors, Mr. Quigley explained, was in companies that had produced neither pictures nor profit.

"The only requirements for launching a motion picture production to-day seem to be nerve, daring and disregard of the other fellow's money," said James H. Quick, editor of the *Photoplay Magazine* and the retiring chairman of the vigilance committee. "Without any experience and with no tangible assets but a felicitously phrased prospectus these Wallingford rush in. Heretofore they seem to have found little difficulty in

securing the money, not only of the so-called widow and orphan class, but often times they induce reputable businessmen—even bankers—to put up their cash."

William A. Brady, president of the national association, said that the reputable movie companies had suffered grave harm from unscrupulous promoters who have foisted their scheme on an unsuspecting public.

## RUTGERS MAN HURT IN FALL

C. Douglas Barnes, a freshman at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, N. J., locked himself out of his room accidentally early yesterday, and sooner than wake his roommate tried to go in through a window. He fell from a ledge and received a fractured skull and other injuries which may prove fatal.

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Last Saturday the Football Extra carried 18 columns on the results of the afternoon's games besides 2 columns of final scores.

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## Frank H. SIMONDS

THE first of a series of articles by Frank H. Simonds on the Arms Conference will appear in *The Tribune* to-morrow.

Mr. Simonds, one of America's foremost writers on international subjects, writes from first hand knowledge of conditions as they exist to-day. His first article is on the all-important American-Japanese relationships—the necessity for a compromise between the American and Japanese points of view.

The success of the coming Arms Conference depends largely on a satisfactory settlement of a Pacific policy. This vital question is discussed in *The Tribune* from the viewpoint of the three powers chiefly concerned—the United States, Great Britain and Japan.

For a clear exposition of all the angles of the Pacific controversy and a proposed basis of settlement read David Jayne Hill and Frank H. Simonds in—

## David Jayne

## HILL

DR. HILL'S article in to-morrow's *Tribune* on the Arms Limitation Conference will deal with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Dr. Hill has had a long and varied experience in diplomatic circles that qualifies him to write with authority on the Anglo-Japanese pact. For a complete understanding of this Alliance, which will play such an important part in the coming Conference, read Dr. David Jayne Hill's article.

To-morrow's — Sunday  
**New York Tribune**